

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”:
THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GET UP (JOHN 5:1-9)

I. Introduction

II. The Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:1-4)

- A. To set the scene for this next sign, verse 2 calls our attention to a pool in Jerusalem “called Bethesda.”
- B. During Jesus’ day, the pool had begun to be used for ritual washings, ceremonial cleansings. It had become sacred space.
- C. Notice the similarity between this account in John 5 and the woman at the well in chapter 4.
 - 1. Like Jacob’s well in Samaria (4:12), the pool of Bethesda had taken on religious significance.
 - 2. It had become a place where one comes into contact with heavenly reality.
- D. The pool had “five roofed colonnades” (v 2) which housed “a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed” (v 4).
- E. The pool of Bethesda was not a glamorous place. It was a place for the rejects of society. It was a place for broken people, deformed people.
- F. There was a stigma that came with such conditions.
- G. In those days, to be blind, lame, or paralyzed was to carry in your body the very power of death, the very reality of uncleanness (see also Lev 21:16-21; Dt 15:19-21).
- H. By healing the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed, Jesus, the LORD God himself, is announcing the day of liberation. The kingdom of God is entering the world and setting the captives free.

III. The Legend of the Pool (Jn 5:4 KJV)

- A. There are “a multitude of invalids” lying around the pool of Bethesda.
- B. The reason pool was considered to be a kind of “holy” pool.
- C. Apparently, there was also a legend that an angel would visit the pool from time to time to stir up the pool. Those who are able to get into the pool at the moment the angel stirs it up will be healed.
 - John 5:4 (KJV): “For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.”
- D. Newer Bible translations don’t contain those words because scholars believe that the older texts themselves don’t contain them (N.T. Wright, *John for Everyone: Part One. Chapters 1-10*, p. 56).
- E. Nevertheless, these words may have been added precisely because such a superstition was known to have existed.
- F. If you were fortunate enough to get into the pool the moment it is agitated, you can be healed from all your diseases.
- G. Like Jacob’s well in the previous account, and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, the pool of Bethesda is a place that is believed to connect people to God.

IV. An Invalid for Thirty-Eight years (Jn 5:5)

- A. Of all the people who were at the pool, our attention is drawn to one person in particular, a man who had “been an invalid for thirty-eight years” (v 5).
- B. Like others around him, this man had a secret wish. He hoped that one day, he would be lucky enough to get into the pool just when the angel stirred up the waters. And at that point, he will get well again.
- C. Do we know of such people today who long for the smile of heaven? What about ourselves? What is our secret wish?
—keep that question in mind. Because as Jesus speaks to this one man, he is also speaking to us.

V. Heaven Takes Notice (Jn 5:6)

- A. Unbeknownst to this man, however, heaven was looking at him today: “Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time...” (v 6)
- B. How did Jesus know the man had been there a long time?
 1. Perhaps people had told him.
 2. Based on what we’ll read later in this chapter, it’s even possible that Jesus received his knowledge about this man directly from the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 5:19).
- C. So Jesus approaches this man and asks: “Do you want to be healed?” (v 6)

VI. Misplaced Trust (Jn 5:7)

- A. The man doesn’t know who Jesus is.
- B. For thirty-eight years, this man’s religion, spiritual life, job revolved around this one pool, which he believed linked him to heaven.
- C. The man’s situation is not that different from...
 1. how the Samaritans based their dignity on their imitation temple and their questionable religious landmarks.
 2. how the Jews base their salvation on their attempts at understanding the Law and doing it
 3. how many of us base our lives on making sure that all our ideals for work and family go according to plan.
- D. We must not distance ourselves too much from this guy. He is after all a symbol of *us*. When Jesus speaks to him, he is also speaking to me and to you.
- E. When Jesus to him and starts a conversation with him, the man takes the opportunity to complain to Jesus about his problem: “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me” (v 7).
- F. The man’s faith is in the *pool* itself. This is a case of misplaced trust, superstition, and idolatry.
- G. Where is our faith misplaced? Do we place our faith in the wrong things?

VII. “Get Up” (Jn 5:8-9)

- A. The Light of heaven has come to help us see ourselves truly; and yet not leave us in despair but to bring us to liberation. That is why the Word of God has come—to give us the truth and to set us free (cf. Jn 8:32).
- B. The Word that once spoke creation into existence now speaks to this man.
- C. Without asking any further questions, without trying to clean up his awful theology, without even asking him how resolved he was to live a good life from here on, “Jesus said to him, ‘Get up, take up your bed, and walk’” (v 8).
- D. Without hesitation, “the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked” (v 9).
- E. God loves us in spite of how bad and broken we are. His love is precisely what heals us.
- F. Salvation does not come from within ourselves. Salvation does not come from any other thing in the outside world. Salvation comes from Jesus Christ alone.
 - John 20:31: “but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

VIII. Let Him Raise You

Jesus comes to you. He knows already what it is that you seek. He knows what has been hurting you for the past weeks, months, or years of your life. He knows about that struggle with that secret sin issue. He knows about your health problems. He knows about your marriage problems. He knows about your deep questions of purpose, meaning, and vocation. He says to you, “Do you want to be healed?” Will you let him heal you? Will you trust him to make you whole? Will you receive the gift that he brings, which, at the end of the day, is ultimately *himself*?

Questions for Reflection

1. Was there anything in particular about today's sermon that blessed and encouraged you?
2. Was there anything that you disagree with or found difficult to accept?
3. According to the KJV of John 5:4, what was the belief concerning the pool?
4. The man put all his hope for healing in the pool. In what ways are we like him?
5. How did Jesus heal the man? How does this miracle exalt Jesus over the pool?
6. Jesus did not heal all those at the pool that day. What does this teach us about the *value* of experiencing physical healing on this side of glory?
7. Jesus' miracles are called "signs." What are they signs of?